

/36 cont./

884 Toward the prepubertal age the boy begins to show his reaction to family punishments and controls, a liberating phase which culminates after puberty with the handing over of his animals when he marries, or before if his pastoral ability allows him taking full charge of them. Then, with his economic independence assured, he is freed from the discipline of the small family. He wants to figure as an adult and take an active part in the life of the community. For the male there is a difficulty as regards the coming of age because they have no initiation rite so that the time of his independence is subject to his economic circumstances and is in consequence elastic. On the other hand, in the case of women the biological phenomenon of menstruation marks the end of their childhood and their transformation to womanhood with all its privileges, rights, and duties.

. . .

861 The mother and the persons charged with the care and training of the child not only make use of punishment to obtain his obedience and submission to traditional norms of conduct but also have recourse to other kinds of stimuli which we might call positive. For example, when the boy tends to cry overmuch and is cowardly when faced by some slight problem, he is told: "Don't cry so much. Are you a girl that you go about crying so much? We should send you to take part in a wake /veloriar/ (1)."

• [564]
[152]

1. Veloriar is used to indicate attendance and participation in the wake for a dead person, during which those present weep mournfully over the corpse.

If the crying is caused by an injury which the mother had foreseen, she says to him: "I told you so; you alone are to blame; no one did you any harm so you need not cry as it is all

/38 cont./

769 of their ancestors or to sympathize with their humiliations, share
867 in their hatreds and common sorrows, as well as to learn to perform this practice and repeat and transmit it when they form their own homes.

● 764 Furthermore, the presence and participation of the children
769 in the ceremonies which are performed at the death of a relative
867 are meant to teach them through experience each one of these ceremonies. Thus he learns and has engraved on him the feeling of mutual support that exists between related members of a group, such as the financial help that must be forthcoming, when it is a case of a poor relative, in order to be able to sacrifice animals and to see to the necessary amount of liquor and hospitality customary on such occasions, and the shrouding of the corpse, the etiquette that life beyond the grave demands from the wife, the relatives who intervene in these activities and their behavior (such as their weeping at the foot of the corpse), fasting and abstinence from meat: in fact every one of the established cultural patterns obligatory at these times, and it is an apprenticeship which the child receives through explanation and personal observation.

The child also shares in the family life during the days immediately after the burial; in the offerings that are taken to the dead one when it is feared, by magical indications, that his life beyond the grave is not normal for lack of something that he needs; in the periodical visits made to the grave and in the bonfires that for several nights are lit to illuminate the path of the dead.

769 Later he joins in the ceremony of exhumation. He knows
571 his part and that of his immediate relatives and, as in the
867 previous cases, each one /39/ of the traditional norms. But the most important thing about all these activities is not to learn to carry them out correctly, but to establish the sense of solidarity with the dead one, with the family, and with the society in which he lives. With the dead, by fulfilling an obligation of consanguinity in order to assure him -- even by coercion of

/155 cont./

755 Any person who dreams of a future happening and the ways of avoiding it can predict in place of the shaman. During our stay in Uribia a chicha-maya dance took place, and a series of propitiatory sacrifices were made which were repeated for three nights. The mother of a Guajiro dreamt that her son would be killed by the husband of a woman with whom he was maintaining illicit relations.

764 It can happen that the shaman practices his curative system and his efforts do not have the hoped-for result. When death occurs, the shaman withdraws after returning the presents that his spirit had demanded, if his treatment was ineffective. In many cases, however, he keeps them for himself when he can find an excuse to justify his failure. As soon as the relatives learn of the death of the sick man, they rapidly cover him and leave him in peace for about half an hour, so that his spirit before going to the place where he will live henceforth may "retrace his steps," that is to say, may roam about among the places familiar to him and say good-by to his friends and relatives. During these moments the persons visited by him feel his presence, which is manifested in some manner and lets them understand by various means the object of his visit. When this time has passed, his whole body is bathed with water and soap; mostly his closest relatives take part in this operation, men and women, in the maternal line and after them the affinal relatives (wife, sons-in-law, and /156/ daughters-in-law). After being bathed the corpse is carefully dried, and if it is a woman her face is covered with paint of the color and kind which she preferred when living because, as she is going visiting according to their belief, she should comply with this precept of etiquette since, if not, she might feel ashamed on meeting her friends and relatives. The paint is also intended to protect her from the action of the sun's rays on the long trip she has to make. They adorn her with all the jewelry she possessed. If she had a large number of earrings, for example, all of them must be

/156 cont./

764 fixed in her ears suspended in a chain, starting with those of her greatest preference; all her necklaces, bracelets, anklets, and rings must be placed on the corresponding part of her body. If the deceased is a man, they also put on his jewelry, as his spirit will need them in the other life to maintain his status beyond the grave. If he belonged to the rich class, he is shrouded in the following manner: First, they cover his head with a special cloth woven by his wives; the bottom of the cloth covers his face, and the ends are fixed behind his head. Over this is placed a second cloth which reaches down to the belt and pins the arms laterally along the body. A third cloth covers the legs, and a fourth may be added to wrap the whole body, but the use of this latter has been gradually disappearing. Thus enshrouded, he is put in the enramada /bough-covered shelter/ within the coffin -- modern custom -- or enveloped in a still fresh hide and placed in a hammock. Then the lamentations begin.

764 The custom exists of sending to all the absent consanguineous relatives, the most intimate friends, and in general all acquaintances, word of the death or of the patient's being near death, as the illness is made known from the first moment, especially to close relatives. If they are important people, runners are sent as soon as the sick man worsens, so that at the time of his death, the house is already full of people. As those who arrive to show their sympathy are so many and they appreciate how impossible it is for the master and mistress of the house to offer them all adequate hospitality, the visitors arrive with their hammocks, water in large pitchers, food, etc., which they bring on their burros.

764 The messenger sent with the news, especially when he carries it to a consanguineous relative of the deceased, knows that he must not pronounce the dead man's name, as this would 551 grievously offend his relatives. For that reason he usually says [173] "That relative of yours who lived in such-and-such a place, who did such-and-such an important thing, has died." Furthermore, none of those attending /the funeral ceremonies/ will pronounce

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551 the name of the dead man in front of anyone, again for fear of offending his relatives, /157/ who, although they may not be present, might be informed by someone looking for payment for talebearing.

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[178] One by one as the persons notified arrive, they express their sympathy. The form of doing so is as follows: The /dead man's/ kinsmen are seated on the ground, or nowadays more generally in the interior of the house (the new customs require the female relatives to remain inside the house seated on the floor, with their faces covered with a large cloth black like the robe they wear). When the outsider arrives he sits down beside them. Then begins the lamentation of the mourner, who mourns with his head bent forward, covered, as is his face. He cries for a more or less prolonged time, interspersing his weeping with short phrases which refer to his sorrow and his loss. He ends his lament, which is taken up by the visitor, and once he has finished they give the traditional Guajiro salutation, initiated by the mourner. They all begin to cry again in chorus, which they suspend to recount the process of the man's death in all its details.

Around the corpse are slung a series of hammocks at graded heights, which are occupied by the closest women relatives as they take turns in the weeping or by a newly arrived one, who, after expressing her sorrow to the family, must weep near the corpse, bending forward over the coffin and placing a hand on it, a magic action which will help her to dream of the deceased. In this position, the visitor, whether outsider or consanguineous relative, weeps in that tone and manner characteristic of the culture, which rather than weeping is like an intoned, melancholy complaint. The Guajiro men weep in a different manner, giving shouts of despair at intervals, without any definite timing. They do this standing up, bending over the coffin and covering their faces with a cloth, a hat, or a hand. On asking some outsiders, participants at a wake, how they were able to cry so intensely and realistically, they explained

/157 cont./

● 764
152 that it was not really for the dead man that they kept vigil, because many times he might be unknown to them, but for the evocation before the corpse of the total sufferings of their group and their personal sorrows.

While visitors and part of the maternal and closest paternal relatives take their places around the deceased in order to take their turn in keeping up continual wailing, the remaining relatives of the dead man comply with the norms of hospitality and courtesy customary on such occasions, which are to receive the sympathy of those who arrive, to serve drink to the men, and to constantly maintain the funeral spirit. The maternal relatives must attend to the distribution of the /158/ livestock of the dead man, a part of which it is customary to give to the visitors who come to offer their condolences.

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554 A wake can and should be prolonged as long as the livestock of the deceased lasts, and in the event that these are too few to maintain the prestige of the status of the dead man's consanguineous relatives, recourse must be had to contributions from the latter. From their point of view, the veritable economic-social status of the dead man is shown by the slaughter and distribution of animals which is made at this moment; also, this has its effect on his life beyond the grave, as the livestock slaughtered and the funeral outfit form the basis of the deceased's status in his other life.

In La Guajira the deaths of some of the most outstanding clan chiefs are long remembered. It is recounted, for example, that the wake of the cacique José Dolores lasted two and a half months until the animals he owned were completely slaughtered and distributed among those who came to show their sympathy. The whole /population of the/ peninsula was mobilized to accompany his kinsmen. They say that no less than 30,000 bolívars (Venezuelan money) were spent on eau de cologne to overcome the putrefaction and the bad odors given off by the corpse during such a long time in the hot climate.

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554 The distribution of animals and drink is made according to the standing of the visitor. Those of high class should be given cattle, mules, or horses (already mature), and rum or brandy in abundance; the poor, goats and sheep, and drink in lesser quantity and quality. In some cases a piece of meat is distributed among them so that they can eat during the funeral gathering.

It is customary to retain a reserve of animals for the second burial, which in a certain way is a repetition of the first.

When the personal property of the dead man is not sufficient to maintain adequately the status of the clan group, his consanguineous relatives, headed and directed by the family head, start a collection which is obligatory in nature to gather together livestock and drink in order to sustain the prestige of the collectivity and that of the dead man in particular. This collection is repeated for the second burial.

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[492] Once all the livestock of the deceased has been distributed, the family orders the burial. If the death occurred outside the lands of his consanguineous relatives where the clan cemetery is located, he is carried there, tied on a horse. All those attending the wake accompany the corpse, on horseback or on foot, drinking incessantly during the whole procession. The grave has been opened previously by a very close and dear relative of the dead man, usually /159/ a nephew, his sister's son, who feels honored with this responsibility. If he should

[E] refuse to do it, it would imply the greatest offense to his group, but we found no such case of refusal to comply with this honorable duty. (The influence of the mission in Upper La Guajira has caused the Indians there to place the body in a crude coffin of wood of the pionillo, a leguminous tree which is very abundant in the region. In Lower La Guajira the body is wrapped in the fresh skin of one of the slaughtered animals, one or two /sic/, which preserves it from putrefaction for a longer time.)

In front of the open grave the funeral procession halts while the children related to the deceased, and later the adults, walk over it, with the idea that this will delay /the return of/ death.

/159 cont./

764 The corpse is lowered into the grave with ropes, with the greatest care taken not to bang it or lower it roughly to the bottom of the grave. This would mean an offense to the dead man, who in some way would show his annoyance at this lack of care, which is in itself an insult; and the relatives would feel considerably offended at the want of respect shown to one who was of their blood and at a time so important to the Guajiro as that of burying a kinsman. It represents, to his way of thinking, an insult almost as great as to refuse to dig his grave, to speak ill of a dead relative, or to pronounce his name.

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783 The same individual who digs the grave covers it with the excavated earth, doing his work with extreme care. Then he goes to his home where he is submitted for some time to a purification ceremonial. The people who formed the procession return to their homes, after shooting off their firearms while the burial is in progress with the idea of frightening off all evil spirits. In times past they shot arrows repeatedly. Upon return the relatives also go through a purification ceremony, and generally, gathered together, they slaughter an animal for themselves from among those which had not been presented nor had belonged to the deceased.

764 For the dead man they place a supply of food and drink in the grave (his favorite food), and if while alive he liked to get drunk, they place an abundance of liquor. His most valued personal utensils, especially his chamber pot, an indication [SN] 591 that the owner was of high status, are placed on his grave, as are his cups and dishes, which also give prestige to the dead man.

765 During a more or less lengthy period his closest relatives go frequently to visit his grave, taking with them food which they eat over it, after weeping there for a long time and asking the dead person to join them. On the eighth day after his death it is mandatory /160/ to make such a visit; later, at the end of each lunar month after the occurrence of the death. These visits are made with more frequency when the relatives believe

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614 7. Work. Labor is obligatory and communal for carrying
out work necessary for the general well-being of the group.
In the case of labor on property held by a single individual,
aid is voluntarily lent by all the others, including men who
may not belong to the same clan. The aid is reciprocated by
the return of identical service when it may be requested.

614 8. Location of the dwelling. We have already spoken
about the location of the home of the new family cell (Cf.
Marriage residence in the chapter on Marriage).

614 9. The clan cemetery. Every clan group has a cemetery
on its own land, built by the co-operative work of its members.
In it all the members of the clan should be buried; if it is not
possible to do so at the time of the first burial, it is mandatory
that the ashes /sic/ at least be taken there. With the indi-
vidualization of property, the small families have constructed
private niches situated in sites near the family house to be used
as the temporary resting place of the remains of their closest
relatives.

614 10. Group feeling. The consanguineous tie between all
the members of the same clan group had brought about a
571 natural feeling of group unity. This feeling included a series
of mutual duties and a number of rights they all could enjoy.
The principal and most outstanding of the first was that of pre-
senting a solid front in the face of any breaking down of the
regimen for social stability when they felt injured by an offense
or when one of the members had broken some cultural pattern,
an act for which the whole clan had to bear responsibility. To
get satisfaction and to give it as a total collectivity was their
essential duty, as it was also to keep in force their prestige
and status through adequate compliance of each of those
functions which put the clan to the test.

The disintegration of the clan unit into more or less large
family cells broken down the group feeling and transferred it
to the family as an independent unit. /page 178 is blank/

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● The cemetery is also very closely related to land rights because every individual hopes to die on his own land, that is, in the place where his elders live and his ancestors lived; on clan territory; and he also hopes to be buried in the communal cemetery. These wishes and hopes of every Guajiro are what elicit long journeys with corpses relatives who died on alien land to give them burial in the cemetery of their ancestors. For this each clan owns a cemetery in certain places of its territory where /217/ the bodies of the deceased members or their bones after the celebration of the ceremony of the second burial may be buried. But in recent times many families who have outstanding social and economic position in the social collectivity have constructed private cemeteries or mausoleums in the vicinity of their family lands for their exclusive use. /page 218 is blank/

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XV

LAWS OF INHERITANCE

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778 In the present state of the Guajiro culture it is extremely difficult to make a basic study of the laws of inheritance because with the process of acculturation taking place in the community, there has been introduced a series of new practices which, combined with the primitive and traditional forms, make the present system a structure difficult to mark off and to subject to fixed norms. We will confine ourselves to giving a few indications of what constitutes what we might call the code of inheritance, but we must make clear that the information we give is by no means complete, and it is possible that certain statements made may have to be rectified later. In general, we can affirm that they constitute the law for that section of the Guajiro community with which we have been in contact. With this in mind we continue our study.

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*756 With respect to the hysterical attacks so characteristic of shamans, there exists considerable confirmation of this in a fact which is connected with the death of these curers. Custom demands that when one of them dies, it is essential that their wake be kept for three consecutive days and nights, because as these attacks occur frequently and at times last for a considerable time, there is a fear that the shaman may not be really dead and that consequently he may be buried alive if the mourners do not wait for a reasonable time to see if he recovers.

*756 3) A magic plant, tobacco, is involved in the making of a new shaman in two ways: (a) The aspiring shaman must chew it for several consecutive days in order to enter into a state of ecstasy and so provoke the absorption of the spirit by his person. One must remember that at the moment the initiate has an attack, a piece of tobacco or manilla is put into his mouth. When [627] he recovers consciousness, he belches loudly because of the action of the tobacco, and these belches are considered to be canticles of praise and gratitude to the spirit which desires to reside in him. The establishment of relations between the spirit and the medicine-man aspirant by means of a magic plant, such as the tobacco we have referred to, is found also among the Conibo: "The apprentice shaman of the Conibo of the Ucayali receives his medical science from a spirit. To enter into communication with the latter, the shaman drinks a decoction of tobacco and smokes as much as he can in a hermetically sealed hut." (8) [Cited in French.]

8. Métraux. Op. cit., 204.

*756 (b) The diviner must see in the different changes in the embers of the tobacco whether the individual whose future he foretells after an attack of illumination will become a true shaman or not. His verdict is final.

4) Dreams, or at least hallucinations, are decisive factors in the determination of the quality of shaman.

*756 5) The vocation of shaman cannot be renounced. Better said, it does not depend upon the individual himself; once the symptoms have appeared and the diviner has given a favorable

[41 cont.]

1. The first of these types refers to the custom established among them of sacrificing, during the wake of any member of the community, a number of animals belonging to the dead man (cows, bulls, goats, sheep), the meat of which is divided among those attending the wake along with the corresponding drink, which in these days is rum but in times past was chicha.

The reason given for the sacrificing of animals during a wake in answer to the question is that this is done in deference to the guests and especially to those whom we could call "professional mourners," who spend all day and all night moaning over the corpse. But on observing certain practices and particularly certain taboos regarding the meat of these sacrificed animals, one has to think rather of the ritual character of the sacrifice.

It is a fact that the relatives — sons, daughters, nephews [and nieces, sabrinós], brothers [and sisters, hermanos] etc. — of the deceased cannot eat the meat of animals sacrificed during the wake or during the later ceremony of secondary burial, as this, according to their belief, would be equivalent to eating their dead kinsman's flesh. This taboo, imposed on the deceased's relatives, serves to prove to us — so far as it is possible to deduce — the ritual aspect of the sacrifice of the dead man's livestock, stock which on being slaughtered takes on the same untouchable or magical quality, which the individual takes on when he disappears from the world of the living and enters the universe of the dead. [42] To put this more plainly, the animals sacrificed are contaminated by their dead owner.

The untouchable quality of the animal sacrificed at the wake or in the ceremony that accompanies the second burial is supported by the following fact. The belief exists in La Guajira that if during pregnancy the mother or the father of the future child is present at the exhuming of a corpse, the child is born sickly, suffers from permanent diarrhea and night sweats, and gets more and more pale and progressively thinner. Its illness continues to get worse, and none of the familiar remedies have the desired effect. The parents then resort to the following system of curing (a system which with some variations is also common among the people of the town of Santander). They wait until there is an exhumation ceremony, and then

[42 cont.]

755 they put the child inside one of the animals sacrificed for the
765 occasion, taking care that the body of the animal is still warm, with the object that the child enter in the warmth.

If they cannot take the sick child to the place where the ritual ceremony is to be performed, the parents take a bone of the sacrificed animal, let it dry, and later cook it in a large quantity of water, with which they subsequently bathe the body of the child. The successful effect should be attained at the first bath or after several successive ones.

755 There is another system of curing this sickness, which the Guajiro call "the chill of the tomb." The presence of the parents at the wake has infected the unborn child with the coldness of the tomb which the dead man is about to occupy. For this reason, the important thing is to drive out the cold, for which they resort to the substitute (when there is no possibility of an exhumation ceremony in the near future) of digging a hole in the earth, approximately the size of the child, placing him in it and then covering him up to the neck with the displaced earth.

755 In any case, as can be seen, the second method is no
more than a substitute for the required and definitive remedy.
764 In the first case there are two magic associations: the participa-
779 tion, passive and involuntary, of the dead man in the transmission of the sickness; and the other, more active, of the cure through the sacrificed animal, which, as we noted, participates in the taboo by virtue of the sacrifice. If it were simply a matter of the cold-hot association, that is, if the idea were to drive the cold out of the sick child's body, the most practical and rapid way would be the third, that is, to put the child's body in an excavated hole and cover it with the displaced earth, so that heating by the sun may bring about the desired effect, particularly if one takes into account the high temperatures that are reached during [43] the day in the semidesert of La Guajira. But there is something more: there is the magic character of the ceremony of the sacrifice -- which is undoubtedly diminishing through the effects of acculturation -- but of which there remains at least the idea of utilizing the magic power of the sacrificed animal, or part

[43 cont.]

755 of the same -- the bone which is left to dry and then cooked --
 764 which also participates in its power, because in the primitive
 778 mentality the part is accepted as the whole, or at least shares in
 the power of the whole, even at a distance.

556 Another meaning that the sacrifice of animals has is that
 736 related to the status of the individual in his other life. One of
 437 the points of reference of status in La Guajira is wealth, which
 is nearly always equivalent to the possession of a larger or lesser
 number of heads of livestock. Livestock represents, in certain
 aspects, Guajiro currency, since interchanges, blood payments,
 etc., are always based on a definite number of heads of live-
 stock, besides of course necklaces of tuma, gold, etc.

556 Naturally, if an individual occupies a certain social posi-
 764 tion in life, it is logical that when he goes to the other life, to
 775 the world of the dead, he occupies an identical position or tries
 to better the one he had in life. This, then, is one of the
 reasons why certain of his possessions are placed near or in his
 tomb, and to complete his "equipment" for the next world, a num-
 ber of animals are sacrificed, the higher his position in society
 the greater the number, so that these may give him the desired
 social position in the world of the spirits.

764 The association, then, is easy to establish: If the individ-
 775 ual in dying passes to a new life similar to the one he led on
 785 earth, then the animal, a living being with a soul like the man,
 on dying must also pass on to occupy a place in the other world.
 This, of course, is only our own supposition. But we find no
 other explanation of the Guajiro statement that the animals
 should be sacrificed so that they can accompany their owner to
 the other world and give him an advantageous position among
 the other spirits.

764 The sacrifice implies above all an act of magic. The fact
 784 that the dead man's close relatives must not eat the meat of the
 778 sacrificed animals, because it would be like eating the flesh
 of their relative himself, establishes the relation between the
 owner and his property in the sense that the latter shares his
 personality. And as the dead man is sacred, or at least taboo,
 that is, sacred in the sense of being untouchable, so also are the
 things that he owned; the animals -- which are [44] to accompany

[44 cont.]

him on his journey and which remain his only possessions, since the rest will be distributed among his heirs -- take on the quality of untouchables.

2. The poisoned arrow. The second sacrifice about which we gathered information has a greater importance than the previous one for two reasons: first, because it is the sacrifice of a human being, and second, because it is linked to a series of ceremonies set in motion to obtain a certain end, the deadly power of the imára, or poisoned arrow, or better said, the magic arrow.

This sacrifice, so far as we could observe, is no longer practiced in La Guajira. According to the information gathered, it was practiced exclusively by the Kusina Indians, inhabitants of the sierra of that name. They were bellicose Indians, warriors, robbers, and animal stealers, who kept the other communities of the peninsula in an incessant state of tension by their attacks and evil-doings. We think it interesting to point out here that these Indians, commonly known as Cocina, according to all the information obtained did not constitute in themselves a separate cultural group. Their language was the same as that of the other Guajiro; their customs were relatively the same, and their physical type identical. Everything seems to indicate that they were no more than social outcasts, all those who, for crimes committed and not paid for in accordance with established laws, had found it necessary to unite themselves into societies outside the law. The question is not entirely clear, and it will be difficult to make it so because Kusina Indians are no longer found in La Guajira.

Bow and arrows stood out among the arms used by the Guajiro. (We say "stood" out because now they chiefly use rifles of foreign make). One of these arrows, which they call poisoned, bears the name of imára. The shaft of this arrow is made of a thin piece of wood taken from the tree called parára and measures approximately 80 centimeters in length. At the upper end of this sharpened shaft is placed poison of a ray or the bone of a poisonous serpent. This imára is what the Kusina Indians used as a last resort in their battles with Whites or with

[58 cont.]

755 associated with some prohibitions of a taboo nature or with established social customs, the origin and in part even significance of which is unknown. But what attracts our attention in this aspect of Guajiro medical [59] practice is preventative rather than curative nature. To demonstrate this, we quote some examples:

753 During the period of pregnancy, neither the father nor the
755 mother should be present at the exhumation of the dead, a cere-
843 mony which the Indians hold to comply with the rites of the
secondary burial. If this injunction is disobeyed, the infant
about to be born will, at birth or a few days later, have a sickly
appearance and will be afflicted with constant diarrhea and
night sweats, and will be characterized by a very pronounced
paleness and extreme thinness.

755 If this occurs, if through carelessness the parents witness
the exhumation of a corpse during the mother's pregnancy and
her child is born sickly, they will not try to blame the child's
illness on any other cause than that just stated. In accordance
with this decision, they will proceed to apply the curing method
appropriate for such an emergency, which, as we noted in the
previous chapter, "Magic and Sacrifice," is as follows: (a) They
wait until there is a *fiesta* of a ceremonial nature for the ex-
humation of human remains and then place the infant inside the
recently opened body of the animal that has been sacrificed for
the ceremony. (b) If the infant cannot be taken to the place
where the ceremony is being held, a bone of the sacrificed ani-
mal is taken, left to dry, and cooked, and the infant is bathed
in this water. (c) If there is no possibility of a ceremony of the
type described being held in the near future, a hole is made in
the sand, and the child is buried therein up to its neck and is then
covered with the loose earth.

843 Neither should the husband of a pregnant woman under any
845 circumstances dig a grave or assist in the construction of a vault
846 (an element of acculturation) destined for the primary or second-
[75] ary burial of any person. If he does his wife will suffer the con-
sequences of this disrespect in her delivery, which will not be
normal: prolonged for several days, very painful, and with seri-
ous consequences for the mother and for the coming child.

[68 cont.]

774 of the soul is uniform, so also the effects of all things are magically related to one another." (46)

46. Born. Fetiché, Amuleto,
Talisman [Fetish, Amulet,
Talisman], p. 2.

764 This polydemonism of which Dr. Born writes, or spiritism as we have called it, can be seen more clearly in the life of the Guajiro communities in the chapter which deals with the aspect of funerals. All the ceremonial relating to the dead is filled with this belief [69] in the universal soul and in the survival of a personal soul after death.

755 In the chapter we are dealing with we see it also clearly established, especially in the curative methods followed by the shaman, or medicine man, who seeks the assistance of his protector spirit or spirits to find out the kind of illness the sick man is suffering from and the manner of eradicating it from his body, as well as in certain aspects of household remedies consisting of preventative methods. In no way different are the 764 taboo prohibitions related to the dead, the burials and exhumations 783 in general, animals sacrificed in funeral ceremonial, and 784 persons who have been in contact, directly or indirectly, with the dead by assisting in the burial or exhumation of human remains, in digging graves, in imprudently gazing on the placing of a burial in the grave, etc., all of which contaminate with the essence of the dead, who by his very nature, by the act of having passed to a higher life situated on a plane of superior potentialities to that which he has left, is converted into something dangerous, sacred or impure, as the case may be, and for this reason contaminating.

751 This contaminating action of the dead also appears in the 755 aspect of medicine since they endeavor to avoid possible harm to children before birth and therefore to pregnant women or those in actual childbirth, because, as we have already seen these are the most likely victims of the malevolent action of spirits. Children especially receive such influences through their parents when they are in the mother's womb and have such poor means of self defense.

[77 cont.]

762 should not be transmitted to the persons who for any circumstance
783 may approach or touch them.

762 The wickedness of the spirit of the suicide, in any event,
769 is seen to be reaffirmed by another Guajiro belief, which is that
775 of not daring to pass at [78] night by the place where an Indian
may have hanged himself because his spirit wanders continually
around the place, and being malignant it will certainly pursue
and chase after one in the form of a great flame or some other
shape.

775 As we proceed to set down the present data relating to the
participation of the dead in the lives of the Guajiro community,
we shall refer to those related to the spirits of suicides with the
idea of obtaining greater objectivity in our statements.

Presence and life of the dead. The spirit of the dead, known
usually by the name wamurú and at other times as yorusa, on
being separated from its body wanders about the world. Although
it no longer has any tangible relationship with terrestrial things,
it is still dangerous. Usually it takes refuge in lonely and iso-
lated places such as in some cemeteries, in the crevices formed
by sea erosion in Cabo de la Vela, or in the solitudes of the
Emejuy forest. But it appears that in addition to these places
frequented by the spirits of the dead, there is one undetermined
special place far away from La Guajira. It is customary when a
woman has died to cover her face with paipai (a paint for the
face) before wrapping her in her shroud and placing her in her
coffin ready for burial. The explanation for this is that she is
going on a long journey, a very long journey, and the sun to
which she will be exposed will be very strong and harmful to
her face. For this reason, according to Guajiro custom, they
must try to protect the skin of her face from the sun's action by
the use of this face paint. Also she is going to pay a visit, and
it is indispensable that a woman should have her face painted
when visiting friends or relatives (86).

751 86. The Guajiro woman, every time she is
exposed to the sun's rays, protects her face
with paipai powder (color of burnt sienna)

[78 cont.]

751

or another powder, achiote, mixed with tallow or other animal grease of some kind, which prevents the severe sunburn which the strong desert sun can cause.

● 764

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The following facts give clearer and more convincing proof of the reality of the dead as beings who pass to another life, to a certain point a material one. When a person dies the relatives usually place by his side at the moment of burial a small portion of chicha in a gourd; they also put in some meat and rum, as indispensable nourishment which he will require during the long journey he has to make. After the burial they place on his grave one of the objects of his personal ownership which had been used by him to satisfy his primary necessities. These objects [76] can be: a night glass (influence of acculturation through civilizado elements) if he is a rich Indian; the jug he used to drink from, or the plate he used for meals. In the case of a woman, in addition to these objects they place a special one, something which she greatly liked and worked with during her life -- for example, her spindle. Furthermore, after having buried the dead person, they light small fires for several nights so that the spirit can find the way it has to travel in its passage to the other world and will not be inconvenienced by losing its way, an inconvenience which might lead to trouble for its relatives.

On the other hand, when the Goejro Indian has emigrated from his country for various reasons, especially in times of extreme summers when poverty becomes felt in an alarming way, and falls ill on foreign soil, his great concern is the need to return to his native land as soon as possible in order to die there and be buried in the cemetery where the remains of the ancestors of his family group lie. This concern, which could be interpreted romantically as a sentimental one, a simple manifestation of homesickness, has another explanation, more sociological and conscious, related to life beyond the tomb. This is that the Goejro, whatever his social or family condition may be, is convinced that after his death he will have to travel a long way

[79 cont.]

- 764 before arriving at the abode of the spirits, a route that would be
 775 most difficult, practically impossible, to follow if he had to set
 off from some place that was not the special cemetery of his
 group; and above all he fears that all the indispensable cere-
 monies required for the success of his post-mortem travels may
 not be complied with.

775 These facts show us their belief in the active influence,
 the continuity of life of the individual after his physical death
 in a spiritual form. It is precisely this belief in life beyond the
 grave which shapes, directs, and controls the activities in the
 life of the Guajiro in innumerable circumstances, as we have
 previously noted. To corroborate this, we single out some of
 this behavior which is directly connected with the spirit of the
 dead.

Return of the dead. One of the stories we obtained during
 the expedition to La Guajira was recounted by the same inform-
 ant who supplied the data about the sacrifice of children in the
 making of magic arrows; she stated that when she was a little
 girl she went one morning with her sister, also small like herself,
 to look for some [80] burros that had been lost. They searched
 all through the day without finding them and at last decided to
 take the road back home. It was already late when the children
 turned their steps toward their home, from which they had
 traveled a considerable distance. The sun was already setting
 when in a small stream bordering on the forest they saw their
 grandmother, who had died some time previously. According
 to the story, the old lady was bathing and was accompanied by
 a boy. The girls, in order to find out if it really was their dead
 grandmother, asked her several questions to which she did not
 reply, an evident sign that it was her spirit that had recovered
 its bodily form. (One can infer from this part of the story a
 characteristic of the spirits of the dead, which is their inability
 to communicate directly with living people by speech; these
 communications only occur in the Indian's dreams when his
 spirit, also freed from his body, can take advantage of this
 condition.) The girls returned home and asked why they had
 seen their grandmother if she was dead. The reply they got was

[85 cont.]

766 head downward, and then they cover it with a piece of another clay olla, new, usually with a base. The urn is buried in the woods at the foot of a special tree called in Guajiro huruwá [824] ("within us," etymologically), with the idea that the other children that are born will not continue dying. No special ceremony accompanies the burial of the child, which must be carried out by the maternal uncle, since neither the father nor the mother may be present because it is believed that if they should be all their other children would also die as they were born.

765 When the first-born dies, and the work of its burial has
766 been complied with, the mother is put through the following procedure: She is hung in a hammock for three days in a closed room (it is really a small house made especially for the purpose). After three days have passed, she is unslung from the hammock, but she has to continue in seclusion for a further five [834] months (five lunar months), and the husband is prohibited from visiting her, with the idea of avoiding sexual contact. After this seclusion the husband may return, and they resume normal married life. During the time she is in the hammock, the [262] woman is not allowed to receive any food except a medicine called hawapi, which serves for fattening. This medicine is a [278] mixture of scraped roots dissolved in cold water [86] and is drunk after being strained. The wife receives this medicine from her mother, who acts as her nurse.

[821] In other words, the mother, by reason of the death of her first-born, has to repeat the complete cycle of seclusion as at the initiation of young women when they reach puberty. The ceremonial is the same, seclusion, taking of fattening medicine, sexual exclusion of the man, and in general all contact or relations with him, etc.

764 If in spite of these precautions the next child should also die, the previous cycle is not followed, but the baby is buried with all due ceremony. A fiesta is arranged for the burial, a wake is held with the usual distribution of liquor, and animals which the maternal and paternal grandparents supply are sacrificed. The mother undergoes a new special treatment but without those of seclusion.

[87 cont.]

858 greater protection than the adult as, owing to his limited defensive capacity, illnesses can readily take possession of his body. We made reference in that section to the malevolent action of certain animals as well as the influence of the dead, the contamination exercised by their spirits on conception and on small children. And now we return to refer especially to this last aspect. We also saw how the harmful effects of animals centered especially on unborn infants due to carelessness on the part of pregnant mothers or of the husbands, and this is repeated equally with regard to funerals.

• [147] When the grave destined for a dead person is opened, small children who go to the funeral, relatives of the deceased, must pass in file over it with the object that death will be delayed and will not overcome them while very young.

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[171] When speaking of sacrifice (cf. Chapter III) as well as when speaking of medicine among the Guajiro Indians in its magic aspect, we quoted the general belief in La Guajira, which is known also as an aspect of folklore in various parts of Colombia, among them Santander and Narino, that if during pregnancy, the father or the mother of the child to be born has been present at the exhumation of any human remains, the child will be born sickly, will suffer from diarrhea, night sweating, paleness, and loss of weight. The characteristic of something touched by death which the corpse has makes it contagious and, so to speak, contaminates the mother of the infant, who because of his weakness is incapable of resisting its influence. If in this case one considers the folklore aspect, the explanation which is given is that the cold of death has affected the child through the person of its mother or its father in the presence of the corpse. The explanation in the case of Guajiro appears to us to be somewhat more complicated, as we had occasion to show above, although the curing processes tend in reality to extract the cold of death from the body of the child after it is born. The method of curing considered infallible by them is to bury the child in the still warm carcan of an animal sacrificed [88] during a wake, and only when there is no such possibility do they make use of the substitute, the bone, or of burying

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[88 cont.]

755 the child in the warm sand, covering it to the base of its head.
752 There is a decided magic intervention, the effect of which we
753 do not know on the part of the sacrificed animal which, as we
754 have said, shares the contaminating quality of its dead owner.

843 Other beliefs which confirm what has been stated are the
845 following: The husband of a pregnant woman should never, for
any motive whatsoever, dig a grave or assist in the construction
of a vault for either a primary or secondary burial ceremony,
because in such a case his wife's delivery will not be normal;
it will be prolonged with danger both to the mother and the child.

Neither should the mother-to-be watch a burial being
placed in a vault because the previously mentioned phenomenon
will be repeated: She will have a difficult delivery, through
delay in the birth and pain.

783 Anyone who has touched a man whose death was not due
753 to natural causes must not come near a sick person because if
764 he does the sick man will quickly die. This also applies to those
who have helped in an exhumation or taken part in any of the
ceremonies called for by the secondary burial. Neither should
such a person go near small children because these will, accord-
ing to Guajiro belief, automatically begin to cry and twist about,
the victims of some sickness.

In general terms, the individual who approaches a corpse,
who touches it, or who participates directly in the different cere-
monies relating to it becomes contaminated. But he does not
suffer the consequences of this contamination in his own person,
unless it be a pregnant woman; he takes on the role of trans-
mitting agent. He becomes an intermediary, if we can so call
him, between the spirit and children, sick people, or pregnant
women, which are the three classes of people preferred by the
spirits of the dead on whom to practice their malevolent con-
taminations. In all three cases the weakness of the contaminated
person is evident: the sick person, the child in the womb unable
to defend itself, and the newborn also incapable of defending
itself against the spirit as it shows in contrast to the other members
of the community, that is, the adult on whom it depends for its

[88 cont.]

753 substance and in general for every aspect of its life.

764 The relation spirit-sickness-death, which we have re-
783 ferred to in previous sections, is corroborated by this class of
beings exposed to the harmful influence of the spirit almost
in the same sense as that in which science regards sickness, i. e.,
the greater the weakness the greater the possibility of contami-
nation from pathogenic germs. In short, [89] death occurs more
frequently among old people and children than among adults.
It is only that pathogenic germs, or the various causes of sick-
ness among the Guajiro, are reduced, due to their mentality
and in the majority of cases, to one cause only, wamrd, the
spirit of sickness and death.

[p. 49 is blank]

...

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VI

Magic Charms

(Fetishes, Amulets, and Talismans)

789 As these three terms, fetish, amulet, and talisman generally
lend themselves to confusion, we wish to clarify the mean-
ing of each one before we proceed further with the subject.

Amulet "indicates an object that possesses the magic,
passive quality of defending the wearer from malignant influ-
ences..." (36)

36. Carrigiani. Op. cit., VI, 87.

Fetish derives from the Portuguese feticio, corresponding
to the Latin word facticus ("made by hand"), and at first was
used to describe Christian amulets, but was used by navigators
in the fifteenth century to describe the primitively carved wood
and stone which were worshiped as bearers of magic forces by the
Negroes of West Africa. The fetish "is an efficacious charm
whose supposed action is guided by the wish of its owner." (37)

37. Idem. Op. cit., 2-3.

[118 cont.]

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If someone dreams that a certain person is dead, and he sees him in that state, it is because he will be seeing a steer killed in the near future; and vice versa if in the dream he is present during the sacrifice of a steer it means that a certain person, who is then identified by the interpreter of the dream, is going to be killed by violence.

If in a dream one sees a person who lives at a distance, it foretells that within a short time he will be seen; and vice versa if the person in the dream lives in the vicinity of the dreamer, it indicates that that person will not be seen for a long time, or never; in other words, he is soon going to die.

If someone dreams that he cares greatly for a certain person, and he sees himself making demonstrations of affection toward him, that person will no longer care for him, he will forget the dreamer [117] and completely ignore him. On the other hand, if the dreamer appears to be very disdainful of an individual and shows his feelings of dislike for him, it means that the person is going to care for him passionately.

When in a dream a person is going to be murdered, this means that someone of his group will die, not the person dreamed of but some other.

If in a dream he has the sensation (nightmare) that he is falling from the hammock in which he is sleeping, that is a sure sign that when he is dead those who are carrying his body to the cemetery will let it fall and crash to the bottom of the grave, when the social norm stipulates that the body of a dead person should be lowered carefully and slowly to its final resting place. Such an occurrence signifies that the hearse of the body held the dead man in little esteem.

A woman who dreams that she has, or that she will have, a daughter is convinced that this means that her home is going to be defamed, that she will be involved in vile gossip and slander; people will say that men have abused her, and when they see her with a man they will say that he is one of the many with whom she has had illicit relations. But when she dreams that the child she will bear will be male, this is a sure sign of a punchi and that her family will be involved in an intestine war and will suffer

[155 cont.]

182 individual or of the dead, in the aspect which we have called
626 "Omens and Augural Birds," in the behavior followed by individ-
789 uals who wish to call up a breeze during a windless calm at sea
or to send away eclipses and lightning which, according to their
belief, are malevolent.

. . .

789 A very interesting aspect of magic is its use for and against
545 some of the cultural institutions and their institutionalized pat-
terns; for example, the use of love charms and the compliance
with certain norms after the period of seclusion accompanying
the ceremonies at the time of a young woman's initiation. Her
aim is to fight against polygamy, with a view either to obtain-
ing predominance over other wives or, better, to prevent the man
who has acquired her for his wife from acquiring more women with
whom she would have to share his life. Possibly due to the influ-
[177] ence of acculturation, there is a tendency toward monogamy on
the part of the women. The men, however, tend toward polygamy
[654] for prestige, since for it they must have a good economical posi-
tion, as the price of women is high, increasingly so the greater
their social position.

751 [156] Another institution that we see directly affected by
771 magic is this same initiation of young women. We saw how
881 the death of a first-born child required a series of ceremonies
to prevent future children dying at birth, one after the other,
and we stated that one of the principal ceremonies consisted in
the observance of certain norms which bring to mind very clearly
the initiation of the young mother. Their idea would seem to
[126] be that one of the causes of the death of the first-born was the
deficient carrying out of the magic-biological-social ceremonial
to which the girl must submit to prepare for her life as an adult.

• 764 Also the norms relating to the dead and the belief in a
775 life beyond the grave rest almost exclusively on magic, and
771 through it their prestige and their functioning are kept up. Magic
626 is also the cause of the fear and respect which relatives and friends
show to their dead, and it is magic which also promotes all the
ceremonial rites that are celebrated in this connection.

weaving, making dresses, hammocks, iaches, &c., sewing, and all the little knick-knacks Indians love so well.

The confinement is not so isolated as it seems, generally several of her female relations are round the door with the eunuch, who of course becomes rather stout, much blanched, almost white, and some exceedingly beautiful. Strangers and men are not excluded from peeping in through the door, always with an eye to matrimony, and she can be sold and liberated at once, though her husband if rich prefers leaving her to complete her term of schooling. On re-entering to society again, a special festival, *aleitia*, is held with dancing, &c. An ox is killed, and the girl is dressed in the clothes she has made; her hair is cut and she resumes all her beads, necklaces, bracelets, and other ornaments.

Women are much respected by the Goajiro. In a quarrel or drunken brawl, women often save bloodshed by stepping in and tearing the weapons out of their husband's or brother's hand. Travelling with women is consequently perfectly safe, and in case of danger, if one undertakes to protect a stranger, he may rely upon coming out all right.

Matrimony is a mere case of barter. The girl is sold for a certain price, fixed by the father. This is paid by the intended husband, and divided by the father, who appropriates the best part for himself and his relations, the rest going to the wife's relations. As it is chiefly in cattle, these are killed and a kind of bridal festival held. There is no other ceremony. A wife is under obligation to support her husband, feed him in food, clothes, &c. She does most of the trading, and a contract made with an Indian is worthless, should his better half object.

An Indian cannot inflict bodily injury on his wife, for he becomes liable to her relations, and should she die during childbirth he has to repay the father what he gave for her. But if the wife is untrue (a rare occurrence) he demands from the father the price he paid for her, who if he cannot refund, helps him to recover from the eunuch, plus tear or compensation from his mother-in-law. At the husband's death, the

wife becomes a legacy to his brother, usually the youngest; if there are none, then his nephew inherits her. The daughter of a chief is worth, according to his wealth and power (i.e. the number of men he can dispose of in a fight) from 6 to 150 head of cattle (100 to 5000).

When a person dies, a grand drinking festival is given, that lasts as long as there is anything to drink—days, and even weeks, with the wealthy. These latter are buried twice, and have two festivals. A rich person is always buried in the ranch, and on the spot where he was born; being often carried for that purpose immense distances. A fire is lighted every night from sunset to sunrise in front of the grave, for the sole use of the dead. Immense piles of wood are gathered for this purpose, so the body is kept two years in the house. Then all the relations can meet on a certain day, and the second feast takes place, when the bones are carefully gathered, placed in a jar, and consigned to the

342 those we had left, but just as simple. Inside were hammocks
 [352] slung this way and that. Along the walls were carrying-nets
 [415] filled with things, and earthenware vessels lay scattered
 [177] about the floor of hard-trodden sand. Some of these vessels
 were grey, others reddish-brown, some had necks and
 handles. One was an obvious imitation of a Dutch liqueur
 jar. It was not far to Puerto Estrella, to which schooners
 from the Dutch islands came.

45 Most of the earthenware vessels had red decoration.
 551 Some, with wavering lines, were obviously the work of the
 oldest of the women, who was frail and almost blind; but
 there was no fault in the shape of the vessel. The woven
 296 cloths were hung up in a special shelter. The warp hung
 [177] vertical and ran like an endless belt over an upper and a
 lower pole. Several related tribes, members of the Aruak
 family, use the same method. When the cloth is finished,
 it forms a ring, and is then cut up.

They were working on a man's belt or sash. The every-
 day belt was only a couple of inches wide, but sashes in-
 tended for more solemn occasions were some eighteen
 inches broad and very colourful. They used red, yellow,
 black and white yarn and the pattern was most interesting.
 Ceremonial cloaks are also woven for the men, just as
 colourful as the sashes, but, to my sorrow, I was never able
 to acquire a really fine specimen. They were simply too
 764 expensive. The rich chiefs collected them, but custom
 65 decreed that they must be wrapped in all their cloaks when
 551 they died, which meant that none were inherited. The men's
 everyday cloaks I have already described; they pulled them
 291 on and then twisted them so that their chest was bared.

The women's dress was considerably more Spartan: it was
 a wide tunic, made like a sack with holes for the head and
 [386] arms, and dyed black with divi-divi or brown with stuff
 from some other plant. Their loin-cloth only became visible
 when they were working in the shade or indoors and
 removed their tunics. It too was black or undyed. They
 themselves thought that there was no call to use a nice
 patterned cloth for underclothes. Little girls often had
 patterned loin-cloths, but then they did not wear tunics

292 A chickamays is full
762 wing
746



291 First burial. The dead
762 person's bier is being
744 carried out from its
shelter



742 The after-burial. A
764 medicine man guarding
the area containing the
dead person's bones



[Facing p. 96]

551 idea being that to speak the name renews the grief of the
 683 dead person's relatives. An old man of the Uriana clan, who
 called himself Juan, died. Some time later some of his
 relatives were at an entertainment, at which too was a
 woman of the Jusuá clan with her little son. A Creole asked
 this woman what her little boy was called and without
 thinking, she replied: 'Juan'. The dead man's relatives then
 claimed damages because she had mentioned the dead man's
 name, and she had to pay them a bullock, even though it was
 a Spanish name. It was the reminder of their grief that had
 564 to be compensated. It is also an offence to tread on an
 Indian's grave.

683 It is more expensive to strike a person than to insult him.
 One should not answer an insult with a blow, but a well-
 to-do Indian will not infrequently do so and gladly pay the
 damages. If an Indian strikes another without hurting him,
 he must pay nonetheless, because he has treated the other
 as a slave—it being only one's own slaves that one has the
 right to strike. If anyone tears a tunic, he must not only
 685 replace it, but pay for the shame the other felt at going
 about in rags.

A thief, if caught, must repay several times the value of
 what he has stolen. Not infrequently he must pay with his
 life, especially if the person he has robbed is a powerful
 personage, as he usually is, and the thief belongs to a weak
 clan that cannot help his family to exact blood-money.

567 A thief can be forced to pay by working for his victim. He
 becomes a debtor-slave. Murder, manslaughter and being
 682 the cause of another's death are the most serious crimes.
 They do not have these actual categories. The penalty for
 manslaughter is very heavy; if agreement cannot be reached
 on it, it can sometimes lead to war, a war in which the
 enemy must either be exterminated or enslaved.

628 It is on such occasions that a *purchi* is held, at which you
 can see the groups of warriors drawn up facing each other,
 while a chief presides.

622 The chief is a mighty person and will have been chosen
 623 for his excellent qualities, yet he is not a judge, but rather
 advocate and mediator. His role is as conciliator. He will

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A Gaejiro man, dressed and painted as a woman. He lived with another man and performed all the tasks of the housewife



Little girl with gold beads around her neck and ankles

After-burial: woman weeping by the urn containing the dead man's bones

● 764
765
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415



[Facing p. 112]

CHAPTER 9

A Wake

ONE day we received an invitation to a rancho owned by well-to-do people. We knew them, but had not been there before. The messenger bade us welcome and told us that the old man there had gone. Francisco crossed himself and said that an old man, an uncle, had died and that there was to be a funeral feast. What the dead man's name was could not be mentioned. We wanted to witness a burial, so we accepted gratefully and set off at once with camera and guns—Francisco having told us that one fired off guns at the feast. 764 ●

There were a lot of people already there when we arrived. Members of the family were often informed when illness took a dangerous turn and so arrived while the patient was still alive. On this occasion they had already laid the dead man out. He had been washed: his best ornaments had been put on him and he had been wrapped in the cloths which the women weave specially for this purpose. After death a woman is painted to make her as lovely as possible, but not a man. The dead person is always left alone for a while, so that his soul can go round a last time and take farewell of the place. Having been shrouded, the old man had been laid in the fresh hide of a newly slaughtered bullock and placed in a hammock strung between two poles under a temporary roof covered with grass. 763

Numbers of people were standing round the dead man's last resting place, while his closest relatives sat in hammocks strung between other poles. All kept their faces covered, either by pulling their cloaks up over them or by draping clothes over their heads. Some were merely clasping their

● 76 hands to their faces. From one and all rose the lugubrious, shrill lament that had to sound uninterruptedly as long as the dead man was above ground. (For some time after the funeral, the man's nearest relatives would begin the day with a song of lament.) After some time the wailers nearest to the bier began to make way for others, and then we too began lamenting, imitating the sound as best we could, as politeness required that every guest should.

One of the men now turned and pulled the cloak from his face. It was our host. He was very glad to see us and, above all, seemed to be flattered that my wife had come. He was already slightly under the weather, swaying a little on his feet, and in one hand he held an enamel chamberpot. He looked so comical that my wife had to hold her handkerchief over her mouth so that none should see what difficulty she was having in keeping a straight face. Our host thought she was very moved and at once ordered one of his fattest sheep to be given her to 'dry her tears', as it is called. He always called her majayara, maiden, remarking: 'She is far too young and lovely to be married.' This, of course, was meant as a compliment. He added that he knew very well what we usually ate. He knew that we were from the same part of the world as the monks and that these people lived on bread, sugar and potatoes. He had tasted them in Nazaret. But perhaps we also liked meat? We assured him that we did, and he promised us large pieces of beef and as much maize beer as we wished. Then he had to go and attend to his other guests.

Burials are big affairs. A good proportion of the dead person's livestock has to be slaughtered to accompany him into the hereafter. The guests feast on this meat, and afterwards each is given some to take home. We walked round to look at the many camps, some under cactus trees, others in the open. There were several hundred Indians assembled there. Everywhere sheep were being slaughtered, meat was being roasted and people were feasting. One old woman was stuffing congealed blood from a calabash with both hands. The whole place smelt of blood, maize beer and spirits. Here and there someone was galloping on a horse. Many of

A WAKE

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the men were already quite drunk. Everyone was chattering, laughing and enjoying themselves. It was more like a fair than a funeral. The sun was in the zenith and there was no shade anywhere. Most of the men had removed their cloaks, only putting them on to go to the bier and lament; but the women kept their tunics on; there were no half-naked women to be seen there. Some of them had tunics of light bought material, and when the wind pressed the cloth against their bodies their forms stood out like reliefs and their skins shone through the thin material. Many of the men devoured them with their eyes, but the women's interest seemed riveted to the steaming boiled meat.

We met a thin and obviously poor Indian who expressed satisfaction at the number of funerals that had lately taken place. He had been attending them uninterruptedly for almost a month, had had meat every day and was beginning to put on weight. Yet he was not high in the social scale. Each person was entertained in accordance with his social rank. [594]

There was not much sleep that night. Lamentation continued beside the bier all night, while sounds of singing, shouts and squabbling came from the Indian camp. We had been told that it would be a day or two before the dead man was buried. That is not done until all the cattle allotted for the funeral have been slaughtered. A number of beasts had been set aside to provide the meat the guests took away with them, and others were being saved for the subsequent funeral. We knew that in two years' time the dead man's bones would be dug up and another feast held.

In that climate a body should not remain above ground even two days, and yet the funerals of the rich lasted much longer. Thus they swathe the bodies of the rich in as many pieces of cloth as possible and in several cow-hides in an attempt to keep the stench from being too offensive. There was a lot of talk about the funeral of a rich chief, José Dolores, that had taken place some years before. How many cattle were slaughtered on that occasion is not known for certain—the monks said about three thousand—but it is known that the feast lasted two and a half months. The body

744 was wrapped in forty-eight beautifully woven cloaks each worth the equivalent of £20-£25. Despite this the atmosphere was not pleasant and during the feast they sent to Venezuela for so much Eau de cologne that it was said to have cost thirty thousand bolivares. What we were attending was thus quite a simple funeral, but it must have cost several hundred pounds.

744 On the third day the body, wrapped in hides, was placed on a horse and taken out to the burial place, where one of the closest male relatives had dug a grave—a great honour that. Everyone accompanied the body. The men drank copiously as they walked along. The dead man was laid in the grave, and some of the sand that had been dug out of it was carefully shovelled in; then they let down food and drink, including a large jar of spirits, and—to our amazement—the enamel pot followed. Indians who have had a lot to do with white people like to take such pots on their journeys, and apparently it was considered that one might be needed even on a man's last journey.

745 After this everyone fired their guns into the air, and those who did not have firearms shot arrows. That was done in the hope of driving away any malevolent spirits who might be trying to worm their way back. A large fire was lit on the grave. This would burn every night for some time to come, in order to light the soul on its journey.

745 Later, the dead man's relatives would go out now and again to lament and take food and drink, which latter they would invite the dead man to share with them. Then, after a couple of years, the man's bones would be dug up and the after-funeral celebrated. We attended several of these; 746 this second ceremony is entrusted to a few female relatives, 747 who, swathed in tunics from head to foot, take hold of the bones with bits of cloth. The skull and skeleton are cleaned and laid on a cloth, in which they are tied up and lowered into a jar and this is taken to the house of grief, where another, though shorter funeral feast is held. After that the jar is buried again.

747 Those who have dug up the bones and all who have touched a dead person, must not eat with their hands for

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several days afterwards, but have to be fed. They also have to keep to a diet for a while, a precaution that, like the cloaks they are wrapped in while digging up the bones, is to protect them against spirits. 767

In the old days the house in which a person died was abandoned. Nowadays that is only done if the person has been murdered. 768

I have come across this after-funeral among several Indian tribes farther south, in particular the Motilon in the Andes, neighbours of the Guajiro, and the Indians of the Llanos plains around the Orinoco. It seems a peculiar custom to us, but it is a sort of memorial ceremony, a feast of remembrance devoted to the dead person, who is thus not forgotten so quickly by the Indians, as is often the case with us. 765
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The animals killed at a man's funeral are to accompany him into the hereafter and enable him to maintain his position there. His immediate relatives must not eat of this meat, which is all given to the guests, who cook it and feast on it. 764 ●

Different in character is the sacrifice of some creature, a black sheep or a brown cow, which the piache recommends when he has dreamed that someone is in danger of being murdered. Here the animal is being killed in place of the threatened man, the goat or cow acting as substitute so that the human can escape his fate. Presumably, what used to happen was that the person threatened had to go out and kill some wild animal, a deer for example. The custom of slaughtering cattle at a funeral originates from the change in the Indians' way of life that resulted from their making cattle-rearing their main occupation. Earlier the dead person was given other grave-goods to enable him to manage in the life hereafter, including ornaments and that sort of thing. In the pre-Columbian era quantities of polished stone beads and tuma were placed in the graves. Then, when fortunes began to be reckoned in cattle and horses, it was obvious that the dead person must have cattle to accompany him. To the Guajiro, as to the general run of Indians, there is no such thing as natural death. Were it not for the dangerous world of the spirits and evil enchanters people 761
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586 minus an amount considered equivalent for the sexual right he had exercised. If a woman dies in her first childbirth the husband may demand
 587 the full return of the bride price (Simons, 1885, p. 792, however, states
 588 that the wife's relatives demand compensation from the husband).
 589 Adultery entails divorce with full return of the bride price. It rarely
 590 occurs, however, as the wife will be treated badly by her own relatives.
 591 At his death a man's wives are inherited by his brother, and next by his
 592 sister's sons; the women may avoid this by making a payment equivalent
 593 to their bride price. If he is of the Catholic faith his children may claim
 594 to be his legal heirs, which leads to conflict with the maternal nephews.
 (See Social Organisation, p. 374.)

562 The influence of women in political affairs is sometimes noticeable.

622 There are cases of female chiefs, and women are respected enough so as to be able to intervene and stop brawls.

• 764 Death.—Funerals are accompanied by festivities which last days or even
 765 weeks, according to the wealth of the family. There are some differences
 766 in the funeral ceremonies which are apparently associated with the particular
 767 alba. These funeral feasts afford the best opportunity for display of wealth, and more than 1,000 head of livestock may be butchered. Every mourner who comes to the feast contributes animals for slaughter and continues to do so as long as he cares to remain. After the mourning period, marked by weeping and lamenting interspersed with drinking and feasting, the corpse, which has lain in a hammock slung from the rafters,
 768 is sewn up in hides by the women (men may not touch a dead body)
 769 and carried to the cemetery of the tribe. For a year or so, the body may
 770 be temporarily consigned to a shallow grave marked by a pile of stones.
 Food and drink are often placed in the grave, and, if the deceased had been
 a warrior, his bows and arrows are put in. A year or two later the bones
 are exhumed and reburied in a large urn. The exhumation is generally
 done at night and is accompanied by a feast. The remains are carried in
 a funeral procession to the dead person's birthplace, where they are
 buried in the family's own cemetery. The funeral urn is placed in a
 vertical position with the narrow neck of the jar protruding above ground
 to permit the free entry and exit of the spirit and to allow the remains of
 other members of the family to be added from time to time. A cactus
 hedge surrounds the cemetery, and in wet weather half a calabash is
 placed over the opening of each jar to keep out the rain. Whenever two
 relatives of a recently deceased person meet, they bow to the ground,
 shouting and groaning, for several minutes. (For a slightly different
 account of the burial of a rich man, see Simons, 1885, p. 792.)

751 If a person is stricken with smallpox the whole tribe moves away, only
 766 the family of the sick person remaining. When the death occurs they
 bury the body below the floor and burn the hut over the grave.